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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on the Promotion
and Protection of Human Rights
Fifty-first session
Agenda item 5

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITH REGARD TO WOMEN

Letter dated 26 August 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the fifty-first session of the Sub-Commission

1. I am addressing this letter with regard to resolution L.24, "Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan", adopted by the Sub-Commission on 25 August 1999.

2. At the time of adoption of the resolution, the delegate claiming to represent Afghanistan, instead of focusing on the subject of the resolution made baseless accusations against Pakistan. This is regrettable. We believe that since he was using the occasion for political purposes there was every reason to rule him out of order.

3. The Pakistan delegation was unable to respond to the allegations made against it because we were told that the procedures of the Sub-Commission do not permit a right of reply. In effect, the delegate claiming to represent Afghanistan received immunity from a response from the country which he had wilfully slandered on the floor of the Sub-Commission. This is neither fair nor democratic.

4. We have been advised to communicate our response in writing to the statement made so that it can be reflected in the records of the meeting. I hope that the following views of the Government of Pakistan will be reflected in full in the records of the meeting.

"The noble Afghan people had hoped to see the restoration of peace after a decade of foreign occupation of their country. Unfortunately, the fulfilment of their dream still remains distant and elusive due to the internal strife within Afghanistan.

"No other country has suffered more from the conflict in Afghanistan than Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan has the highest stake in the restoration of peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan's consistent policy has been to promote a peaceful and negotiated settlement in Afghanistan. Pakistan is the only country which remains engaged with all the Afghan parties in the conflict.

"Soon after assuming office in February 1997, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, launched an Afghan peace initiative. This culminated in the meeting of a Steering Committee in April this year at Islamabad for the purpose of working out the modalities for an Ulema convention that would discuss the problems of Afghanistan in accordance with the Shariah and the traditions of the country. While significant progress was made by the Steering Committee, the process was derailed by minor differences among the Afghan parties.

"We strongly support the six plus two process initiated under the aegis of the United Nations. We are persisting in the effort to promote reconciliation between the Taleban Government and the Northern Alliance. In this context the latest efforts to help bring peace to Afghanistan through a comprehensive dialogue between the various Afghan parties was held through talks in Dushanbe two days ago. Pakistan continues in its efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan.

"Pakistan has always respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Pakistan believes that the resolution of peace in Afghanistan would not be possible without the cessation of all outside interference in Afghanistan. The impounding last year by the Kyrgyz authorities of a full trainload of weapons destined for the so-called Northern Alliance (700 tons, according to some reports) shows that massive arms supplies continue to be smuggled into Afghanistan. In this context, we have consistently called for a comprehensive embargo of supply of arms to all sides in the Afghan conflict.

"The allegations made against Pakistan by the person representing one faction are self-serving and counterproductive."

5. I hope the entire text of our comments will be reflected in the report of the fifty-first session of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

(Signed): Munir AKRAM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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